

23 wherein said energy return system comprises a first rigid plate, a second rigid plate spaced a predetermined distance from said first rigid plate, and at least one separating element disposed therebetween to maintain the spacing between said plates, the separating element allowing independent movement of the first and second rigid plates with respect to one another in multiple dimensions.

24 (Amended) An article of footwear comprising:
an upper;
an outsole defining a ground engaging surface;
a sole disposed between said upper and said outsole, said sole including an energy return system;

wherein said energy return system comprises a first rigid plate, a second rigid plate spaced a predetermined distance from said first rigid plate, and two separating elements disposed therebetween to maintain the spacing between said plates, a first one of said separating elements being disposed in a toe area of said article of footwear and a second one of said separating elements being disposed in a heel area of said article of footwear.

25 (Amended) An energy return system for use in a shoe sole, said system comprising:

a first rigid plate;
a second rigid plate spaced a predetermined distance from said first rigid plate;

at least one separating element maintaining the distance between said first and second rigid plates, the separating element allowing independent movement of the first and second rigid plates with respect to one another in multiple dimensions.

26 19. (Amended) An article of footwear incorporating the shoe sole of claim 18.

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(Amended) A shoe sole for an article of footwear comprising:
an outsole defining a ground engaging surface;
an upper rigid plate spaced from the outsole for attachment to an upper;
a lower rigid plate disposed between the outsole and the upper rigid plate;
and
at least one separating element disposed between the upper and lower rigid plates to maintain the separation thereof, the separating element allowing independent movement of the first and second rigid plates with respect to one another in multiple dimensions.

Please add new Claims 21-32 as follows:

21. (New) The article of footwear of claim 1 wherein said at least one separating element comprises two separating elements.

22. (New) The article of footwear of claim 21 wherein the two separating elements allow the first and second plates to move independently of one another in all dimensions.

23. (New) The article of footwear of claim 21 wherein a first of the two separating elements is located entirely forward of a ball of a wearer's foot.

24. (New) The article of footwear of claim 1 wherein the first and second rigid plates are not fixed to one another in any dimension.

25. (New) The energy return system of claim 8 wherein said at least one separating element comprises two separating elements.

26. (New) The energy return system of claim 25 wherein the two separating elements allow the first and second plates to move independently of one another in all dimensions.

27. (New) The energy return system of claim 25 wherein a first of the two separating elements is located entirely forward of a ball of a wearer's foot.

28. (New) The energy return system of claim 25 wherein the first and second rigid plates are not fixed to one another in any dimension.

29. (New) The shoe sole of claim 20 wherein said at least one separating element comprises two separating elements.

30. (New) The shoe sole of claim 29 wherein the two separating elements allow the first and second plates to move independently of one another in all dimensions.

31. (New) The shoe sole of claim 29 wherein a first of the two separating elements is located entirely forward of a ball of a wearer's foot.

32. (New) The shoe sole of claim 29 wherein the first and second rigid plates are not fixed to one another in any dimension.